

Shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, with the attack on the Twin Towers and Pentagon, many people asked “Why did God allow this to happen?” “Where was God?” “Why didn’t God stop them?” I will admit I wondered it, too, myself. Why wasn’t God’s hand of protection on our nation that day? Why did He allow all of those people to die? Many different pastors have spoken for God in answering that question, which I will not address here, but I did find one unique observation. About three months after 9/11, I was visiting a doctor’s office, and picked up a Christian magazine they had in the waiting area. While I forget the name of the magazine and the author, he had a startling point which made me think. He pointed out that we should be glad God did not intervene and prevent the events that transpired. Glad?! Why? Granted, God does choose to intervene in the affairs of man, but He does not on the magnitude and frequency that perhaps we would like.

If God intervened on Sept. 11, the author pointed out, He would have every right and precedent to intervene in our daily lives in areas that are harmful to us. He would stop us from eating certain food and eating habits that are not healthy. He would intervene in what we watch and entertain ourselves with. He would have to intervene on such a level that there would not be the free will of man. If God dictates every aspect of our life, we are not free to serve Him. Granted, God is in control, but we still live in this world with consequences of our actions, or inactions.

Throughout the Bible, there are numerous examples of where failing to fulfill man’s responsibility would have had disastrous results. The entire world would be dead if Noah, instead of building the ark, waited for God’s supernatural intervention. If Lot decided to wait for God to protect his house and family, he would be consumed along with the fire that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah. There are many God-fearing individuals in the Bible that would have died, or been killed if they did not fulfill their responsibility.

For some reason today, many good Christians in America have the idea that God will intervene supernaturally to prevent them from having to take responsibility for themselves. Unfortunately, the

Christians in the 70% of the world that is not America can disagree with that. Persecuted Christians in China, Korea, Africa, Middle East, and others know that even Paul and the Apostles were imprisoned, had to flee for their lives, went through shipwrecks, and even John the Baptist was imprisoned while Christ was on earth. Yet Christ did not intervene.

You may have heard the saying, Christ does not do things to us, He does things for us. This paper is not saying God does not care and provide for us; He does. He also has fathers, and husbands provide and protect. He also gives wisdom, knowledge, and discernment. It is interesting that Solomon asked for discernment and wisdom. He knew that if he did not make good decisions, the nation of Israel would reap the consequences. God would not overrule his foolish decisions or inaction. **Matthew 25:14** is the parable of the talents which were given to the individuals, and they were held accountable for using them. The one who didn’t use what was given him was punished!

One verse which is quoted a lot is **Philippians 4:6,7**. It says, *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”* As our pastor recently pointed out, cares are not responsibilities. This verse is not saying we take our responsibility to God and leave everything for Him to do; it says to leave your cares i.e. Anxieties and worry. The verses do not say He will take care of every problem so you can forget about it. It says that if we leave the worrying and anxiety to Him, our hearts and minds shall be strengthened; not that our problems will disappear.

What about you? When someone tries to tell you of something that can affect your family, house, church, or nation, what is your response? I know several people whose response is that we should not worry about it, God will take care of it or make it disappear. Well, I have some questions for you. Do you vote? According to those previous reasons, we don’t need to vote, because God controls the outcome and puts in charge who He will. While He does do that, we still have the responsibility to vote. One of the greatest

hypocrisies is when people give their response that we should not worry and God will make all problems disappear, and yet they turn around and pay their monthly bills to renew their medical, fire, renter’s, car, and whatever else insurance. I bet you won’t find them leaving their house and leaving it unlocked. We have responsibilities in this life, and it’s just not the small things like locking doors or buying cars with airbags. It’s things like saying no to abortion, call senators, getting a gun to protect your family with, staying informed of local and national laws and news, speaking out against corrupt officials, informing others, standing up for what is right, defending your liberties and family, and more!

In Luke 22:35, Jesus asks His disciples the question, *“When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”* Why did God meet their needs before; yet now He was telling them to provide and protect? Barnes makes a good observation in that Jesus was not referring to the upcoming arrest at Gethsemane, but about their future life. They were going to be in the midst of dangers, and that their manner of life was about to change. No longer would they be working among the familiar villages in Galilee and Judea, they were going to be going throughout the world. They were going to have to make provision to protect themselves against wild beasts and robbers while traveling. In fact, Christ stressed protection so much here that He urged them to sell their garments so that they could protect themselves! Having an extra coat or two is not very helpful if you are being chased by lions or jackals, or meet up with some thieves in the night. God would protect them, but He specifically told them that they were going to be responsible for their own protection as well.

In Matthew 10:22, Christ again opened the disciples’ eyes to the life ahead for them. *“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.”* Even Paul claimed this verse when he was let down the wall in a basket to

escape those who sought for his life. Christ said that there will be people that hate you for no other reason than that you are a Christian. You maybe the sweetest person on earth, never hurt anyone, but if you are a Christian, there are individuals who hate you, and would not shed a tear to see you dead. That is strong language, but that's what Christ was telling His disciples. Expect it and prepare for it.

One of the best examples in the area of the free will of man and God's control is in **Matthew 4:6** which says, *"And [Satan] saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."* Satan here, tempts Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the Temple to the pavement below. Trying to convince Jesus to jump, Satan quotes Scripture! **Psalm 91:11,12** says, *"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."* The Four-Fold Gospel resource explains that Satan's words appeal to Jesus to be more religious; to put more trust and reliance upon the promises of the Father; and he puts him in the place—the Temple—where he might argue that God could least afford to let His promise fail. Of all the times and places where God would surely intervene supernaturally, so that Jesus would finally get the honor and glory He deserves, should be here with Jesus and the Temple? Right? God decides the place and time, not us.

Do angels sometimes intervene? Yes. Can we count on it? No. Jesus' response to Satan gives a firm warning for us as well. He told Satan, *"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."* This is a commandment in God's Holy Word. **THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD THY GOD.** Wait, you say. This temptation was not tempting to sin, was it? How do we tempt the Lord? We tempt the Lord to not protect us. We should not presume that God will protect us if we do something foolish, when we could have acted otherwise. Those who object to blood transfusions because they believe God will intervene are tempting God to not protect them. Unfortunately,

sometimes when they tempt God to not protect them, He withdraws His protection and they die.

As we said before, the Bible sets many precedents of where God told individuals an event was going to happen, God's part, and their part (Lot, Noah, Elijah, etc.). **1 Timothy 5:8** says, *"But if any provide not for his own and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."* The word 'provide' here literally means 'to perceive before, foresee; think of beforehand'! The Bible says that if we do not think and act for our families and loved ones 'beforehand', we are denying our faith, and are worse than the unbelieving. It's interesting that he mentions the unbelieving, because they naturally provide for their family's protection! **Acts 11:28** clearly illustrates this principle when the prophet Agabus warned the church that *"there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea."* A prophet of God told them great dearth was coming, the church acted on what they knew, collected relief, and helped out the brethren less fortunate during the time which came (according to the verse, during the time of Claudius Caesar). Christians can protect and provide (in the Biblical sense) for their family, friends, and brethren to be ready ahead of time. People don't wait until their car is stolen to put an alarm on it. People shouldn't wait until someone is breaking into their house to consider getting a gun. People don't wait until a blizzard starts to run out to the store for food and fuel. Yet many Christians today are not prepared to provide or protect. **Ecclesiastes 7:17** says it best: *"Neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?"*

Be informed, plan ahead, prepare, provide, and protect. You will be held accountable one day for the 'talents' that God has entrusted you with. I encourage you to constantly remember Christ's command:

THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD THY GOD.

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Tempting God

The Errors of Presumed Protection



Why didn't God stop Sept. 11?

Will God intervene in my life?

What are my responsibilities?

Can we tempt God?